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RURAL DISTRICT OF ROMNEY MARSH

KENT




ANNUAL REPORTS OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1956





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ROMNEY MARSH RURAL DISTRICT, KENT

Annual Reports of the Medical Officer
of Health and Public Health Inspector
for the Year, 1956.

Mr. Chairman and Councillors,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1956.

The Home Population at mid-year was 4,510 i.e. 10 less than the previous year, as estimated by the Registrar General.

The number of births was 80, (39 male and 41 female) and represents an increase by 14 over the previous year. The equivalent crude-birth rate was 17.74; when adjusted by the Registrar General's Comparability Factor, which is based on a population standardised for age and sex distribution, the rate becomes 20.58; that for England and Wales was 15.7.

The number of still-births was 2, and the equivalent still-birth rate was 24.39, compared with that of 23.0 for England and Wales. The majority of still-births are due to prematurity and abnormal congenital causes, but nevertheless adequate ante-natal supervision and skilled obstetric attention are essential safe-guards against a high rate.

There were two infant deaths and the corresponding infantile mortality rate was 25.0, compared with that of 23.8 for England and Wales. The cause of these deaths was (1) Congenital Heart Disease and (2) Prematurity.

It should be stated that these figures are too small to have much statistical significance as small increases or decreases would influence the rates disproportionately.

It is always gratifying to record that there were no maternal deaths due to pregnancy, childbirth or abortion. From the beginning of this Century, the number of these deaths was comparatively high and remained stationary at 4 deaths per 1,000 births throughout the Country until 1936, after which the rate has steadily declined due to a combination of various factors; for example the introduction of the Sulphonamides in 1936 and later in 1941 of Penicillin and other subsequent Antibiotics, has reduced the morbidity and mortality from Puerperal Sepsis which was a prominent cause of child-bed illness and death; the Midwives Act 1936 introduced a whole-time salaried domiciliary midwifery service and the skill of trained midwives became available to more expectant mothers; also Hospital facilities for admission and treatment had been greatly improved, including improved blood transfusion services.

The total number of deaths from all causes was 51 (29 male, 22 female) and the equivalent crude death-rate was 11.31; when the rate is adjusted by the Registrar General's Comparability Factor, as for births, it becomes 10.41, which is lower than that of 11.7 for England and Wales.

Twenty-three of those deaths were due to Heart and Circulatory Diseases which are the usual cause of deaths amongst the aged.

Disease of the Coronary Artery of the Heart is however an exception, as it claims many victims in middle-age and has been increasing in incidence throughout the Country during the past 25 years. Six deaths were due to this cause. The ages of death were 63, 64, 66, 71, 72 and 72 years. The ratio of deaths

was 5 male to one female. Although these figures are small to have statistical significance, these deaths usually predominate in males, which would prima facie appear to give support to the hypothesis that this disease is a so-called stress illness associated with the highly competitive pace of modern existence; it may also be related to excessive smoking which acts as a sedative to stress.

There were 11 deaths from Cancer, which is invariably the second highest cause of deaths. It is not known how many of these patients received treatment and thereby how many years their lives were prolonged, but modern treatment by surgery and Radio-therapy is achieving excellent results when the diagnosis is made reasonably early. The insidious nature of the disease and procrastination by patients are common factors associated with late diagnosis.

Cancer of the Lung caused two deaths. The ages at death were 66 (Female) and 68 (Male). Like Coronary Thrombosis, this disease has been increasing in incidence during the past 25 years, and the weight of evidence that smoking is one of the causes is heavy - particularly the excessive inhalation of tobacco smoke, which apart from Cancer, is harmful to lung tissue. Similarly atmospheres contaminated by impurities such as the fumes from combustion engines would appear to be correspondingly dangerous.

The other causes of death were miscellaneous and there was no unusual incidence.

There was no death due to the Infectious Diseases.

There was a small outbreak of Measles, 46 cases having been notified. Outbreaks commonly occur every second year when there is a sufficient number of susceptible children. Fortunately, it is not a serious disease per se, today, as it is highly infectious for several days before the typical rash appears and it spreads quickly during this period through class-rooms. Its most dangerous complication is Broncho-pneumonia, which commonly develops rapidly within 12 - 24 hours to an advanced stage; treatment by antibiotics is, however, usually specific against the secondary invading bacteria. Otitis Media is another less common complication.

Only two cases of Whooping Cough were notified. Like Measles, this disease is most highly infectious for about seven days before the Whoop identifies it to parents, and also spreads rapidly when susceptible children are exposed to the infection, especially in crowded class-rooms. Whooping Cough vaccines for immunisation will be made available in the County Child Welfare Clinics in 1957 - 58, and it is hoped that immunisation by the modern vaccines will be as effective in preventing the disease, as immunisation has been against Diphtheria - there is no other effective means of prevention. Immunisation is also available through the family Doctor. The chief and most dangerous complication of the disease is Broncho-pneumonia, which, as with Measles, may supervene rapidly and is very dangerous in infants. No time should be wasted in effecting treatment by the Antibiotics.

Two sporadic cases of Scarlet Fever were notified. In its present phase, this disease is mild and severe complications are uncommon, the most prominent of which today is Otitis Media. Epidemic types iv and xii occasionally occur and are capable of causing Acute Nephritis. Most patients are now treated at home when social conditions are satisfactory. Treatment by the sulphonamides and/or antibiotics is invariably specific, and has largely replaced the use of antitoxin. In the field of prevention, swabs should be taken from the nose and throat of every schoolchild, who has been suffering from the disease, before he is allowed to return to school, as many small out-

breaks have been kept going by convalescent carriers, apart from immune carriers who usually harbour the streptococci in their noses.

Ten cases of Acute Primary Pneumonia were notified. As secondary Pneumonias are not notifiable, the total number of cases of all the forms of Pneumonia are not known. There were three deaths. When the organism causing the Pneumonia is sensitive to the Sulphonamides and/or Antibiotics treatment is usually specific; prior to the introduction of the latter, Pneumonia was a major cause of death.

There were no other cases of infectious disease.

Today, the virus diseases constitute a more complex problem than the bacterial infectious diseases.

The most formidable of these is the virus of Poliomyelitis but there is firm ground for hope that the British Vaccine will effectively prevent the onset of paralysis amongst those immunised, and that immunisation will become a routine preventive measure, when sufficient vaccine becomes available.

There are also grounds for optimism that effective vaccines against the viruses of Influenza will be prepared and if so, another great stride forward will be achieved.

There are other unidentified viruses which cause illness in the central nervous system, such as Benign Aseptic Meningitis, which clinically may be easily confused with non-paralytic Poliomyelitis; and those which cause infection of the respiratory tract, such as the atypical Pneumonias, Laryngo-trachio-bronchitis and of the nose and throat with febrile catarrh. Although these latter infections are not usually dangerous to life, they are a cause of much absenteeism from school and employment.

A Virological Service has been established within the Public Health Laboratory Service to study and identify these viruses.

Regarding Tuberculosis one new case of Respiratory type was notified. The Chest Physician for the area is responsible for the ascertainment, the investigation of the source of infection, including examination of contacts and for the arrangements for treatment. In the field of prevention, improved Hospital facilities for X-ray examinations and the periodical surveys by the Mass Radiography Service are providing an invaluable service in detecting early, or latent, or unsuspected cases who can be successfully treated and there-after would not be open sources of infection to others. Also B.C.G. Vaccination will be offered in 1957 to school-children aged 13 years through the agency of the School Medical Service. Great progress has been made in treatment and it would seem reasonable to hope that this once dreaded disease will be eradicated from the Country by the end of this Century.

One case of non-respiratory Tuberculosis was notified. Bovine Tuberculosis was once wide-spread, due to infected milk and meat, but the introduction of Tuberculin Tested Herds and of Pasteurisation and the strict supervision exercised over the production and distribution of milk and of meat in the slaughterhouses by the Public Health Inspectors are achieving their objective.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your interest and assistance in the work of the Department, and also the staff for their efficient co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. MARSHALL

MB., Ch.B., D.P.H.

SECTION A.

STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

FOR 1956

Area:- 31,031

Registrar-General's Estimate of:- The Resident Population	...	...	4,510
Number of Inhabited Houses According to the Rate Books	...	...	1,841
Rateable Value:-	...	...	£58.625
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	£227

Social Conditions

Romney Marsh Rural District is essentially agricultural in character and interests but, as part of the boundary is formed by the sea with wide expanses of sand, there is considerable catering for the large numbers of holiday-makers and weekend trippers who are attracted to the district, and associated there are large holiday-camps and licensed caravan sites. There is negligible unemployment and social conditions are generally satisfactory.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

		<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>		<u>Romney Marsh Rural Dist.</u>	<u>England and Wales</u>
1.	Live Births	80	39	41	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population	17.74	15.7
	(a) Legitimate	73	36	37			
	(b) Illegitimate	7	3	4			
2.	Stillbirths	2	2	-	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	24.39	23.0
	(a) Legitimate	2	2	-			
	(b) Illegitimate	-	-	-			
3.	Deaths	51	29	22	Death rate per 1,000 resident population	11.31	11.7
4.	Deaths from Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion.	-	-	-	Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births.	-	Not available
5.	Deaths of Infants Under One Year of Age	2	2	-			
	(a) Legitimate	1	1	-			
	(b) Illegitimate	1	1	-			
	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births					25.0	23.8
	Rate re legitimate infants					13.7	
	Rate re illegitimate infants					142.86	
6.	Deaths from Cancer (all ages)					11	
	Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)					-	
	Deaths from Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea					-	
	Deaths from Measles					-	

The following cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year 1956.

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	2
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	2
Acute Primary or Influenzal Pneumonia					10
Measles	...	...	...	...	46

CAUSES OF DEATH IN ROMNEY MARSH RURAL

DISTRICT DURING 1956

ALL CAUSES				Males	Females
				29	22
1. Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	...	1	-
2. Tuberculosis, other	...	...	...	-	-
3. Syphilitic disease	...	...	...	-	-
4. Diphtheria	...	...	...	-	-
5. Whooping Cough	...	...	...	-	-
6. Meningococcal infections	...	...	...	-	-
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	-	-
8. Measles	...	...	...	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	...	...	...	-	-
10. Malignant neoplasm, stomach	...	...	...	1	1
11. Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus...	...	...	...	1	1
12. Malignant neoplasm, breast	...	...	...	-	3
13. Malignant neoplasm, uterus	...	...	...	-	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	...	...	...	2	1
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	...	...	...	-	-
16. Diabetes	...	...	...	1	2
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system...	...	...	...	3	1
18. Coronary disease, angina	...	...	...	5	1
19. Hypertension with heart disease	...	...	...	1	1
20. Other heart disease	...	...	...	2	7
21. Other circulatory disease	...	...	...	-	2
22. Influenza	...	...	...	-	-
23. Pneumonia	...	...	...	3	-
24. Bronchitis	...	...	...	2	-
25. Other diseases of respiratory system	...	...	...	-	-
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	...	-	-
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea...	...	...	...	-	-
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	...	-	-
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	...	1	-
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	...	...	-	-
31. Congenital malformations	...	...	...	2	-
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	...	...	...	3	1
33. Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	...	-	-
34. All other accidents	...	...	...	1	-
35. Suicide	...	...	...	-	-
36. Homicide and operations of war	...	...	...	-	-

- 7 -

Year of Birth

Last complete course
of injections
(whether primary or
booster) 1952 - 1956

The following is a return of (A) the number of children who were immunised against Diphtheria and (B) the number of persons who were vaccinated against Smallpox, during the year ended 31st December, 1956.

Year of BirthRe-inforcing
Inoculation

Before
1942

Re-Vaccination

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality, 1956

<u>Age Periods</u>	<u>New Cases</u>				<u>Deaths</u>				<u>Total cases on Register</u>			
	<u>Respiratory</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory</u>		<u>Respiratory</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory</u>		<u>Respiratory</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory</u>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	10	3	2
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 and upwards	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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Number of deaths from tuberculosis of patients who had not been notified as suffering from that disease. 1.

REPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR AND SURVEYOR

Mr. E. Hall resigned from the above appointment on the 11th December 1955, and was succeeded by Mr. H. J. Taylor on 24th January, 1956. For the period between these dates essential work, especially meat inspection was carried out by Mr. W. Collins, Public Health Inspector of New Romney Borough Council.

Sanitary circumstances of the Area

1. Water supply: The district is supplied by the Folkestone and District Water Company and by the Mid-Kent Water Company. Two extensions to water mains were carried out:-

Hammonds Corner, Old Romney, to supply five houses and agricultural land.

Old Cheyne Court, Brookland, to supply 12 houses and agricultural land.

Approximately 96% of the houses in the district have a piped water supply.

Five samples were obtained and these were satisfactory.

2. Drainage, Sewerage and Sewage Disposal: No development has taken place during the year under review but at the time of writing the Council are awaiting the result of an application to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and the Kent County Council for a loan to proceed with the drainage of Dymchurch and St. Mary's Bay. This scheme is urgently required in view of the gross pollution occurring in the stagnant surface water ditches. Serious pollution occurs of the sands at Dymchurch from the existing sewer which discharges crude sewage onto the beach at low tide which is then washed up across the foreshore by the returning sea.

If this main drainage scheme is not proceeded with very shortly the Council will have to consider the purchasing of additional cesspool emptying vehicles in order that the various septic tanks with very bad effluents could be converted into cesspools and emptied at frequent intervals. In order to do this satisfactorily several new vehicles would be required.

3. Cesspool emptying

During the year, 1205 cesspools were emptied, comprising 2071 vehicles loads. Two free emptyings are given in each half year, thereafter a charge is made of £1 per emptying, except for the trade premises which are charged £1 per load with no free emptyings.

4. Public Cleansing

A new barrier loading diesel engine, Dennis 12 yd. refuse collection vehicle was purchased in September to replace an old side loading 8 yd vehicle. This has proved more efficient and has enabled the service to be maintained as before, in spite of a greater quantity of refuse without taking on additional labour. If the volume of refuse, especially during the summer, increases by any appreciable amount however, additional labour will be required.

A weekly collection is made in the more densely populated coastal area, and fortnightly throughout the remainder of the sparsely developed Marsh. Trade refuse is collected at the rate of 6d. per bin from the various Cafes, shops and holiday camps.

5. Housing

Number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health and Housing Acts.....	56
Number of houses found to be in any respects unfit for human habitation	24
Number of houses inspected and found to be unfit and repairable at a reasonable expense	19
Number of houses in which defects were remedied by informal action	20
Number of houses in which defects were remedied by statutory action	Nil
Demolition orders made	Nil
Houses closed in pursuance of an undertaking given under Section 110 of the Housing Act, 1936.....	Nil
Number of dwelling houses reconditioned and undertakings cancelled	Nil

6. Improvement Grants and Conversions

Improvement Grants were made in respect of 16 houses, the total cost of improvement works being £7,810. 13. 0. In nearly every case this entailed the complete reconditioning of the houses and included provision of bathrooms, hot water supply, drainage systems, new floors and works to prevent rising dampness.

7. Sanitary Inspection of the area

During the year the following inspections and visits were made:-

	<u>No. of visits</u>
Complaints - general	47
Complaints - Housing	20
Housing inspected	56
Concerning Improvement Grants	76
Nuisances found (19 premises)	65
Nuisances abated (20 premises)	51
Infectious diseases investigated	5
Premises disinfected	4
Re-visits	106
Caravan sites and holiday camps	16
Caravans	25
Premises disinfested (verminous)	3
Visits, re-rodent control	23
Cesspool emptying	81
Refuse collection	133
Bakehouses	3
Slaughterhouses (meat inspection)	84
Slaughterhouses (Premises)	3
Cafe kitchens	52
Food premises (Food & Drugs Act)	65
Stalls (Food & Drugs Act)	15
Shops (Shops Act)	54
Ice Cream (premises)	8
Licensed premises	15
Dairies	2
Milk distributors	2
Water supply	11
Factories	26
Sewers and sewage disposal plant	91
Housing (application for re-housing)	9
Unfit food	5

Petroleum regulations	11
Building Inspections (Byelaws)	197
Inspection under Town and Country Planning Acts	94
Council Houses (under construction)	28
Council Houses (Repair)	221
Car Parks (visits and inspections)	125
Public conveniences	127
Miscellaneous visits and re-visits	132
Shops (various)	46
Cafes	22
Public Houses (mostly selling food)	21
Hotels and holiday camps	5
Slaughterhouses	1
Stalls	15

Food premises registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Acts, 1955.

Ice Cream	22
Sausage manufacturers	6

There are no manufacturers of ice cream in the district.

Educational activity: No organised education of food handlers has been carried out.

Condemned food: Disposed of by the Council to refuse tips.
Total amounts disposed of (all voluntary surrender)

1cwt. 21 lbs. 12 ozs.

Ice Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations 1947 - 52

Five samples were obtained and all were satisfactory. All ice cream sold in the district is made by large scale manufacturers, none of whom have premises in the district. Samples are only taken when it appears that there may have been a breakdown of refrigerators etc., or where contamination is suspected.

Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955 - 56

All food premises affected by these regulations have been inspected and the majority were found to be up to the necessary standard. Works of improvement have been carried out at ten premises, being:-

Hot water supply	9
Wash hand basin with H & C water	1
Sink	1
Ventilation	1
New conveniences (Public Houses)	2

Some other premises are still to be brought up to standard, but these are mostly of seasonal occupation only, and it is anticipated that the works necessary will be carried out before the summer season commences.

Milk Supply

Only pasteurised or tuberculin tested milk is sold in the district. Three samples were obtained and they were satisfactory.

Petroleum Installations

Three new installations were inspected and tested.

Rodent Control

There is one part time rodent operator. Total number of visits made ... 728

Meat Inspection

All meat inspected is at a small slaughterhouse, being the only one in the district. This is a private slaughterhouse and supplies one butchers shop only. Please see table.

Factories: Please see table.

CARCASSES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	<u>Cattle exclud- ing Cows</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep and Lambs</u>	<u>Pigs</u>
Number killed	47	0	2	27	188
Number inspected	47	0	2	27	188
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	1	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	8	-	-	1	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	16.5%	-	-	4%	2.1%
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	5
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	2.5%

Cistercercus Bovis. No evidence of infection found.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections by Public Health Inspector)

Premises	Number on Reg- ister	Inspec- tions	Number of Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
i. Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	-	-	-	-
ii. Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	10	13	-	-
iii. Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	4	3	-	-
	14	16	-	-

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found		Referred:- To H.M. By H.M. Inspec- Inspec- tor tor		Number of cases in which prosecut- ions were instituted	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		(5)	(6)
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding (s.2)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)						
(a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	-	-	-	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (Not including offences relating to Outwork)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	1	-	-	-	-

